

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (currently amended) A telecommunications network comprising:

a first SONET/SDH ring that comprises a first plurality of nodes, wherein said first SONET/SDH ring defines a first address space and wherein each of said first plurality of nodes is identified by a unique address in said first address space; and  
a second SONET/SDH ring that comprises a second plurality of nodes, wherein second SONET/SDH ring defines a second address space and wherein each of said second plurality of nodes is identified by a unique address in said second address space;  
and

an optical fiber that carries a first ~~traffic working~~-STS-N that comprises:

- (1) a second ~~traffic working~~-STS-1 that is associated with said first SONET/SDHSDN ring, and
- (2) a third ~~traffic working~~-STS-1 that is associated with said second SONET/SDHSDN ring;

wherein there are at least two nodes that have an address in the address space of said first SONET/SDH ring and an address in the address space of said second SONET/SDH ring, and wherein traffic STSs are distinguished from protection STSs.

2. (canceled)

3. (currently amended) The telecommunications network of claim 1 wherein the further comprising an optical fiber that carries a first traffic STS-N further that comprises:

- (1) a first automatic protection switching channel that is associated with said first SONET/SDH ring, and
- (2) a second automatic protection switching channel that is associated with said second SONET/SDH ring.

4. (currently amended) The telecommunications network of claim 3 wherein the further comprising an optical fiber that carries a first traffic STS-N further that comprises:

- (1) ~~the~~  $K_1$  and  $K_2$  line overhead bytes that are associated with said first SONET/SDH ring, and
- (2) ~~the~~  $K_1$  and  $K_2$  line overhead bytes that are associated with said second SONET/SDH ring.

5. (currently amended) A telecommunications network comprising:  
a first SONET/SDH ring; and  
a second SONET/SDH ring;  
an optical fiber that carries a first traffic STS-N that comprises:

- (1) a first traffic STS-1 that is associated with said first SONET/SDH ring,  
and
- (2) a second traffic STS-1 that is associated with said second SONET/SDH ring;

wherein traffic STSs are distinguished from protection STSs.

6 through 11. (canceled)

12. (currently amended) A method of operating a time-division multiplexed telecommunications system, said method comprising:

receiving a first optical carrier signal that comprises a first source address and a first destination address in a first address space;

receiving a second optical carrier signal that comprises a first source address and a first destination address in a second address space;

multiplexing said first optical carrier signal and said second optical carrier signal into a SONET/SDHSDN ~~traffic working~~ frame; and

transmitting said SONET/SDHSDN ~~traffic working~~ frame;

wherein said first optical carrier signal in said frame comprises a second source address and a second destination address in said first address space; ~~and~~

wherein said second optical carrier signal in said frame comprises a second source address and a second destination address in said second address space; and

wherein traffic frames are distinguished from protection frames.

13. (currently amended) The method of claim 12 further comprising:

receiving said SONET/SDHSDN ~~traffic working~~ frame;

demultiplexing said first optical carrier signal and said second optical carrier signal from said SONET/SDHSDN ~~traffic working~~ frame;

transmitting said first optical carrier signal, wherein said first optical carrier signal as transmitted comprises a third source address and a third destination address in said first address space; and

transmitting said second optical carrier signal, wherein said second optical carrier signal as transmitted comprises a fourth source address and a fourth destination address in said second address space.

14. (currently amended) A method of operating a time-division multiplexed telecommunications system, said method comprising:

receiving a SONET/SDH traffic working frame that comprises (1) a first optical carrier signal that comprises a first source address and a first destination address in a first address space, and (2) a second optical carrier signal that comprises a first source address and a first destination address in a second address space, wherein traffic frames are distinguished from protection frames;

demultiplexing said first optical carrier signal and said second optical carrier signal from said SONET/SDH traffic working frame;

transmitting said first optical carrier signal, wherein said first optical carrier signal as transmitted comprises a second source address and a second destination address in said first address space; and

transmitting said second optical carrier signal, wherein said second optical carrier signal as transmitted comprises a second source address and a second destination address in said second address space.

15. (currently amended) The method of claim 14 further comprising:

receiving a first optical carrier signal that comprises a third source address and a third destination address in a first address space;

receiving a second optical carrier signal that comprises a fourth source address and a fourth destination address in a second address space;

multiplexing said first optical carrier signal and said second optical carrier signal into said frame; and

transmitting said SONET/SDH traffic working frame;

wherein said first optical carrier signal in said SONET/SDH traffic working frame comprises said first source address and said first destination address in said first address space; and

wherein said second optical carrier signal in said SONET/SDH traffic working frame comprises said first source address and said first destination address in said second address space.